AN ENQUIRY

INTO THE

DESTRUCTION OF THE ANCIENT ALEXANDRIAN LIBRARY,

BY

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FREE TRANSLATION (FROM THE ORIGINAL URDU.)

BY

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Translator. City Civil Court, Hyderabad, Deccan.

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DEDICATED

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TO

NAWAB MOHSINUL-MULK, MOHSINUD-DOWLAH

MOULVI SYED MAHDI ALI KHAN BAHADUR

MUNIR NAVAZ JUNG,

FINANCIAL SECRETARY,

TO

HIS HIGHNESS THE NIZAM'S GOVERNMENT;

WHO, BY HIS EDUCATION, ATTAINMENTS, IMPRESSIVE ELOQUENCE, POSITION AND PRINCIPLES,

HAS DESERVEDLY ATTAINED TO THE HIGH STATUS OF A

LEADING MEMBER OF

THE MUHAMMADAN COMMUNITY;

AND

WHO TAKES A DEEP INTEREST IN THE SPREAD OF TRUTH AND THE DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE

BY

HIS MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

MUHAMMAD GHOUSE SAYEED.

HYDERABAD, DECCAN,
1st *March*, 1893.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

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THE Translator begs to state that while keeping to the sense of the original Urdu, he has tried to give as free a rendering as circumstances permitted.

He takes this opportunity of expressing his best thanks to Moulvi Shibli Nomani, Professor of Arabic, Aligarh College, and Author of the original, in Urdu, for the readiness with which he kindly permitted the publication of the translation.

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In conclusion, he has also to thank the Printers, Messrs. Vest and Co., for the neatness of the printing and the general get-up.

MUHAMMAD GHOUSE SAYEED.

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Of the many mistaken notions that at one time arose in Europe in relation to the history of Islam, and still continue to possess the public mind, the subject of this *brochure* is one.

Though the Europeans had, from a long time previous, ample means of acquainting themselves with the true history of the Mussalmans, the foundation of their present knowledge of that history was only laid during the period of the Crusades. The impression, which the Europeans began to have of the Mussalmans, at this period, when, in the words of the historians, they began to emerge from darkness and to make any progress in literature and politics, was mainly that they were a fighting, destructive and barbarous people, and, worst of all, they were the enemies of the Sacred Cross, as also of Jerusalem, the holy place of Christian worship.

About this time also, numerous strange stories began to spread in Europe about the Mussalmans,—which was of course but natural. The erroneous and unfounded notions that prevailed in Europe regarding the religion, nationality and social manners and customs of the Mussalmans, by-and-bye

reached such a stage of notoriety that they came to be quoted as proverbs by high and low. When in course of time, books, such as histories, stories, novels and philosophical works, came to be composed, these current ideas found their way largely into them. To mention an instance. Bacon, in his essay on 'Boldness,' writes :—Muhammad one day, trying to convince his audience that he was the true prophet, asked those that were present, to go to a distant hill which was in sight, and order it to come to him ; whereupon the men carried the message to it. But how could a hill move? When Muhammad saw that this was the case, instead of feeling ashamed, with great sauvity, said—" Oh, it does not matter! If the hill will not come to Muhammad, Muhammad will go to the hill."*

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* The author's translation of Bacon's language is evidently incorrect. The following is an extract from the "Essay" itself :—" Muhammad made the people believe that he would call a hill to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law. The people assembled : Muhammad called the hill to come to him again and again ; and when the hill stood still, he was never a whit abashed, but said : 'If the hill will not come to Muhammad, Muhammad will go to the hill.'

So these men, when they have promised great matters, and failed most shamefully, yet, if they have the perfection of boldness, they will but slight it over, and make a turn, and no more ado."

Thus the inference which the author draws from the extract is also consequently erroneous—Translator.

Bacon was no historian, nor does he appear to have cited this instance in any way derogatory to the great Prophet; but he only mentioned it as an illustration, in the course of a dissertation on 'Boldness'; the reason being, that such traditions had permeated the atmosphere of Europe, and the public had accepted them as fundamental truths.

During the last century, or century and a half, Europe has inclined more and more to a critical enquiry into the truth of such traditions, which has resulted in an ever-increasing exposure of their groundlessness; so much so, that the celebrated historians of Europe have begun to accept it, as a fact, that they are a source of disgrace to Europe. Carlyle in his lecture on Heroes and Hero worship, said:—

"The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, (Muhammad), are disgraceful to ourselves only."

As the lecture was on Muhammad, Carlyle had to confine himself to the allegations against the prophet; he might otherwise have dealt with the many current false traditions regarding Islam and its history. Though modern research has tended to lessen the number of these erroneous beliefs, it has not yet succeeded in demolishing them *in toto*. The reason, however, is that these traditions, having obtained a very wide circulation among the

nations of Europe, their truth could only be fearlessly enquired into by such critics, as did not find themselves overwhelmed with the weight of public opinion. And critics of this class are but few indeed!

Again, in every nation, critical enquirers are always in the minority. Though only such facts deserve to be believed in, as the critics themselves have, after careful enquiry, accepted; yet their researches do not find their way beyond the select few, to the sphere of the general public, or into popular works. Thus the celebrated critics of Europe, such as Gibbon, Carlyle, Godfrey Higgins, Bosworth,* Renan, &c., have discarded many of the current European traditions regarding Islam, as entirely unfounded; notwithstanding which, however, they continue to find a place in popular works.

Of such a nature is the tradition of the destruction of the Alexandrian Library. The pertinacity with which the Europeans have insisted on the tradition is surprising in the extreme. Histories, Novels, Stories, Proverbs, Poems, Fables, &c., all refer to it. Turning from the region of literature, if we proceed to works on Logic and Philosophy, we find that the charge is not forgotten. One of the questions set in Logic, for the

* Evidently, Bosworth Smith.—Translator.

First in Arts Examination of the Calcutta University of 1882, was—" Point out the fallacy in the following :—Writings which agree with the Book of God are useless; and those that disagree with it ought to be destroyed."

Another question which strikes us in this connection, is—why do the Europeans display so much sympathy with the Alexandrian Library? It is acknowledged on all hands that the Christians had no connection with the library, the idolatrous Kings of Egypt having founded it, centuries before the advent of Christ. It may be said that this sympathy is the result of the appreciative and philanthropic spirit of European society ; but were this so, we ask, why has Alexandria been specially selected? Other large libraries have shared this alleged fate, and no hue and cry has ever been raised. Who has lamented, or proclaimed to the world, the destruction of the libraries of Persia by Alexander the Great, or the destruction by the Christians of Spain, of millions of books and other monuments of learning collected during long centuries by the Mussalmans? To what then is this special sympathy for the Alexandrian Library due?

The fact, however, is, as we shall presently show, that this library was destroyed by the Christians themselves, led to do so by their religious leaders. At the time, the act was gloried in ; but when, with

the spread of civilization and enlightenment, Europe found, to its dismay, that the stain of this barbarous act clung to it, it was found that the only practicable means of effacing it, was to transfer the blame to some other nation. When the Mussalmans conquered Egypt and took Alexandria, there was not a trace of this library; but prejudiced Christians attributed the alleged barbarian act to them. As Europe was then blinded by prejudice and sunk in ignorance, no one cared to enquire into the truth of the story, and the false accusation consequently spread far and wide. The fate of the library has been deplored by Europeans in language which leads one to believe that the library was their own collection. Such, however, is the popular opinion up to the present day, for no one has ever thought of attributing the act to the Christians themselves, as, it is evident, that no nation will ever destroy its own handiwork.

But what truth is there in this allegation, whose echo, at one time, filled every part of Europe? Alas! It is entirely unfounded! How then was it possible for such an unfounded statement to attain such publicity and acceptance, for such a length of time, in all the countries of Europe? The question is apparently difficult, but the answer is not far to seek. As we have already pointed out—and it is not to be wondered at,—such baseless allegations and hundreds of similar unfounded

traditions were very generally accepted as true, during the middle ages, in Europe. As civilization advanced, the matter came to be discussed and many a celebrated writer disputed its truth. It is indeed astonishing to find that even now there are people who believe in the truth of such an allegation, though its falsity ought, long ago, to have been once for all considered proved.

Two reasons may be assigned for this. In the first place, even in a progressive age, the spirit of ignorance and barbarism does not become altogether extinct; nor is it possible that it should do so. In the next place, the European method of conducting enquiries into historical events seldom leads to a final decision. The original object of research is lost sight of, and the discussion digresses on the intellectual and the conjectural possibilities of its occurrence, many minor points thus acquiring undeserved importance. The discussion gradually assumes enormous proportions; but the original point remains undecided. The present is an instance, as the sequel will show. This subject has been under discussion in Europe for a long time, and numerous standard works have been written on it. In many of the general histories of the Mussalmans, the authors have, after referring to it, left on record their personal opinions regarding its truth or falsity. It may not be out of place here to give a general idea of the nature of the works bearing on the subject, that

have been consulted by the author, as quotations from them are given in their appropriate places. Foremost among them, we would mention Gibbon's History of the Roman Empire, and refer particularly to the Chapter on the "Moslem Conquest of Alexandria," which contains a few short, but critical remarks.

Ægyptica, or observations on certain Antiquities of Egypt; by J. White, D.D. Professor of Arabic, University of Oxford, 1801, in which the learned author supports the tradition.

Successors of Muhammad; by Washington Irving, page 113.

The Saracens; Story of Nations Series, page 254.

History of Arabia, Ancient and Modern; by Andrew Crichton, page 393.

History of Conflict between Religion and Science, by Draper, pages 103 and 104.

The *London Spectator* has an Essay in support of, and another against, the tradition.—*Vide Spectator* dated 2nd and 23rd June, 1888.

Encyclopædia Britannica; (article Alexandria).

Histoire Generale Des Arabes; Par L. A. Sedillot Tom.

Professor De Sacy's Translation of, and Note on, Abdul Latif Bagdadee's book, containing a lengthened discussion.

Mr. Krell's (of Germany) paper on the subject, read before the fourth session of the Oriental Congress, held at Florence in September, 1878.

The most important point to be discussed as regards this tradition is, whether it finds expression in European or Arabian histories. The matter, however, is not disputed, for, favourable and unfavourable authorities are both agreed on it. The majority of European historians who refer to it, do not maintain that they rely on any independent authority, but profess their indebtedness to Arabic historians. However this may be, we shall now proceed to trace how this baseless story came to be current in Europe.

The first man to give publicity to it in Europe, was Abulpharagius. The son of a Jewish physician named Aaron, he was born in 1226 A.D., in Malatia. As his father was a convert to Christianity, he was brought up in the principles of that religion. Besides his knowledge in divinity, he acquired an intimate acquaintance with the Arabic and the Syrian languages. On account of his learning, he was appointed Bishop of Guba in the twenty-first year of his age. Gradually he reached the dignity of *Primate* of the Jacobites, next only to that of Patriarch. Abulpharagius wrote an ex-

haustive history in the Syrian language compiled from Syrian, Arabic, Persian and Greek sources. He also wrote an Abstract of this work in Arabic, called *Mukhthasarud-Dawal*, which was published with a Latin version in 1664 by Dr. Pocock, Professor, Oxford College. There are several editions of this work, all of which, however, are imperfect. In some parts, the Abstract goes beyond the original Syrian. It is uncertain, whether the additions were made by Abulpharagius himself, or are interpolations, due to some one else. In this Abstract, the destruction of the Alexandrian Library by fire has; for the first time, found mention, and it is through its Latin version that this tradition reached every part of Europe. Gibbon in his history writes:—"Since the Dynasties of Abulpharagius have been given to the world in Latin version, the tale has been repeatedly transcribed." Washington Irving, Arthur Gleen, M.A., Mr. Crichton and many other authors have also admitted it. All traditions against the Mussalmans, whether true or false, were, about the time the Latin version made its appearance, greedily accepted as true; in consequence of which, feelings of detestation and hatred began to be entertained against that nation. Thus it was that the tradition began to permeate every kind of European literature with great force.

The following is the literal translation of what Abulpharagius wrote:—(*vide* Mukhthasarud-Dawal by Abulpharagius, London, 1663, pages 180—181).

"At this time, John, who had derived the surname of *Philoponus* (from his laborious studies in grammar and philosophy,) was well known among the Arabs. He was a native of Alexandria and a Jacobite Christian. When, subsequently, he rejected the Christian doctrine of Trinity, the priests of Egypt assembled together and called upon him to retract his heresy; but he did not listen to them. The priests thereupon degraded him from his rank. He lived to a very old age; for, when Amr Ibnul-A'as took Alexandria, he presented himself before him. Amr had heard of the ability of Philoponus and he therefore received him with great respect, and listened to his discourses on philosophical subjects, such as the Arabs had never known. As Amr himself was a clever and intelligent man, he was greatly struck and became charmed with him. He therefore found John's company indispensable and never allowed him to leave his side.

"One day, John said to Amr,—'You have taken possession of every thing in Alexandria. I do not object to your keeping that which is useful to you, but I think that we people are more entitled to the possession of those things that are not useful to you.' Amr asked him what he wanted. John replied that he wanted as a gift, the philosophical works contained in the royal libraries. Amr replied

that he could do nothing in the matter without the sanction of the Caliph, who was accordingly communicated with; in reply to which the following order was received:—

"If the writings, you refer to, are in accordance with the Book of God, there is no necessity for them, in the face of its existence. But if they are against the Book of God, you better commence destroying them." Amr distributed the books among the numerous baths of Alexandria, and ordered that they should be burnt. In short, it took six months for them to be consumed. Read and wonder!"

The tradition in this form, went on spreading for a long time; but it occurred to no one, to enquire into its truth. The first man who critically examined it, was the celebrated historian Gibbon, the founder of the modern style of history, who wrote:—"For my own part, I am strongly tempted to deny both the fact and the consequences." Gibbon adduced several reasons for this rejection; among which are that Abulpharagius was born five* hundred years after the event, and that no writer before him, even among Christian historians, mentions it. How, then, can the evidence of Abulpharagius be considered reliable? When Gibbon rejected the tradition as untrue,

* Evidently a mistake for six hundred.—Translator.

Europe awoke from its slumber of ignorance: and numerous learned men devoted their time to critical researches on the subject. After Gibbon, two classes of critics arose, one of which upheld, while the other rejected the tradition. As it is an acknowledged fact that in the first century after the Hegira, no contemporary History of Islam was written in Europe, it follows that all the histories that have been compiled up to date, or are being compiled in Europe, regarding the Prophet and the first four Caliphs, are based upon Moslem works. We therefore find that those who wanted to prove the truth of this tradition, also had to refer to Arabian historians for confirmation of their theories. Mr. Crichton, (who is angry with Gibbon for his rejection) in his work on the "History of Islam," writes:—If this circumstance were entirely dependent upon the evidence of a stranger (Abulpharagius) who wrote six hundred years after the event, then we must pause before accepting the statement of the Armenian historian (Abulpharagius). But this statement is not based upon his writings alone, for, Makreezi and Abdul Latif, who have written histories of Egypt from the earliest times, also mention this tradition. Mr. Krell has openly accepted this view. He writes that, to the best of his knowledge, the tradition is mentioned primarily in the history compiled by Abdul Latif, who was born five hundred years after the alleged event.

The tradition being thus solely based on Arabic histories, it is very easy to come to a conclusion as to its authenticity. In the matter of acquaintance with Arabic writings, we have a greater claim than the Europeans, for, as the proverb goes, "a man in the house knows more of its condition than an outsider." The European writers who uphold it, quote Abdul Latif Bagdadi, Makreezi and Haji Khalifa as authorities, *ad nauseam*, and add that these historians are very reliable and their evidence cannot be rejected. One English writer, evidently unacquainted with the subject, has even gone the length of quoting *Ibn-i-Khaldoun* as his authority; and, with characteristic shamefacedness, wrote—*Ibn-i-Khaldoun* has, in his history of Caliph Omar, mentioned this tradition. *Ibn-i-Khaldoun's* history is a well-known work, but in no part of the chapter on Omar is there a single word about this fiction. Having thus disposed of *Ibn-i-Khaldoun*, there remain only the three above mentioned authors upon whose writings the tradition is apparently based.

We now turn our attention to the critical examination of this tradition from the historical point of view, in the course of which we shall show that the authority, which the European historians derive from these authors, does not exist. In the critical examination of historical events, two methods may be adopted—(1) the "authoritative"; and (2) the "probable." By 'authority' we mean

the basis of an event on the testimony of some person who was present at its occurrence. All the standard Arabic histories are based upon this principle, and, in them, the authority is generally traced back to the original person, by the statements "heard from, or learned from, so and so;" after which the names of all the intermediate persons are given, through whom the tradition is traced to the original person, who was present at the time of its occurrence. This system was followed up to the fourth century after the Hegira, since which time, however, the practice has become less common.

By the method of 'probability,' we mean the consideration of an event in its relation to the following circumstances, *viz*: the dictates of human nature, the peculiarities of the times, the possibilities of its occurrence and other similar circumstances. If the event does not stand this test, grave doubts arise as to its truth; and there arises a suspicion that the tradition has undergone a change in assuming its present aspect.

In the critical examination of this tradition also, we shall adopt these methods. Whereas in this discussion there are two parties, one of which denies it and the other claims to have proved it; and, as in such cases, the *onus* of proof lies on that party that claims to have proved it; we have in the first place to discuss the proof that has been adduced.

As far as we are aware, (and we can emphatically declare that no body can adduce better evidence in the discussion), the argument brought forward by all the European writers, amounts to this, that the alleged fact is mentioned by Abdul Latif Bagdadi, Makreezi and Haji Khalifa. The points at issue are (1) whether these writers have made any statements in this connection, which can be accepted as evidence; and (2) whether their evidence is conclusive.

The European historians who uphold this tradition erroneously quote, again and again, these three as authorities. Those who deny the tradition consider that their evidence is unreliable. Thus the discussion has, so to speak, drawn a curtain over the fraudulent manœuvres of the European historians, for it became confined to the consideration of whether the authority of Abdul Latif and others, was reliable or not, though the first and foremost point to be decided is, whether the statements of Abdul Latif and others constitute any evidence at all.

The most important point therefore to be discussed is whether the statements of the three above noted authors constitute three independent pieces of evidence. Makreezi's History printed in Egypt is before us. In volume I, page 151, the author describes the *Minaret of Savari*, one of the most celebrated in Alexandria, under the heading

"*Minaret of Savari,*" and under it, transcribes word for word, the language of Abdul Latif's description of it. In Abdul Latif's work, the Alexandrian library finds only an incidental mention, and as Makreezi has quoted Abdul Latif word for word, the description of the library has also been similarly transcribed. It is on account of this, that M. Langles, the celebrated French *Savant*, is compelled to admit that Makreezi's description is not independent evidence, but on the other hand, is only a transcript of Abdul Latif's words—(*vide* Professor De Sacy's note on the translation of Abdul Latif Bagdadi's history, page 240, Paris 1810). M. Langles holds views contrary to ours, but he has been compelled to admit this. Those European historians, who have not seen Makreezi's book in original, like those who believe in a thing without seeing it, often refer to him. But M. Langles was unlike them, as he had read Makreezi in original, in which though he describes with great minuteness of detail, the conquest of Alexandria, he has not written a single word about the library, from which it can reasonably be inferred that the above mentioned event can be placed in the category of authentic historical occurrences.

Having thus eliminated Makreezi's name, there remain only two, *viz.*, Abdul Latif and Haji Khalifa. The European historians often refer to the latter but they do not quote his words; for, had they

done so, their argument would have probably been weakened. We are greatly indebted to Professor De Sacy, the celebrated French author, who very emphatically tries to establish this tradition ; for, it was he, who exposed the secret, by quoting Haji Khalifa's words (which translated are as follows):—

"In the early days of Islam, the Arabs confined themselves to the study of the Revealed Law, and the sciences of Lexicography and Medicine. As such knowledge was of every day use, it was studied by a few. As the tenets of Islam had not obtained a firm hold on the minds of the people, it was feared that the ancient sciences would interfere with popular beliefs, so much so that it is alleged that the books they found in the conquest of different cities were burnt."

In the above extract, the name of Alexandria is not even mentioned. Only the burning of books, in a general way, is stated, and even this statement is prefaced with—"*it is alleged*—" which evidently shows that it was a vulgar tradition. From the style of the passage, it does not at all appear that the author wanted it to be believed as a genuine occurrence. Haji Khalifa only describes the lack of attention towards knowledge that prevailed in the early days of Islam, and in the course of it, mentions a common tradition as such. The incident reminds us of the following.

Napoleon wishing to be looked upon as the Commander of the Faithful in Egypt, had recourse to many subterfuges, among which it is alleged that he uttered the Muhammadan article of Faith * in the Mosque at Azhar, and said his prayers along with the community. This style of writing is very common, and an author or speaker is thus enabled to give utterance to even the most unfounded traditions. The fathering of the mention of the burning of the Alexandrian Library on Haji Khalifa, is such an astonishing piece of audacity, that it could not have emanated from any but European writers.

The testimony of Abdul Latif Bagdadi alone remains to be considered, which is in reality the last refuge of European historians. Abdul Latif wrote a history of Egypt which he finished on the 10th Shaban 603 Hegira. It contains a description only of those circumstances and events which Abdul Latif himself witnessed in Egypt. He has a chapter on the *Minaret of Savari*, where he, after describing it fully, writes that around the tower there are four hundred small pillars. In the course of this Chapter, he writes as follows :—

" And I find that it is the same portico in which Aristotle, and his disciples after him, taught, and it was the Academy which Alexander

*There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his prophet.

had established when he founded the city, and that in it was located the library which *Amr Ibnul-A'as* burnt under the orders of Caliph Omar."

From this, any one can understand the spirit in which Abdul Latif refers to this circumstance. Mr. Krell, the German author, after quoting the above passage in his paper, writes :—It does not appear to have been mentioned with any particular object, nor is it intended to remind us of any real occurrence. A well-known tradition is, however, mentioned, which, the pilgrims of that time had given wide currency to ; and it belongs to that class of irresponsible and unreasonable stories which were current during the middle ages among the pilgrims with respect to Jerusalem.

A diverting incident in this connection is, that not only is Abdul Latif's mention of this circumstance unfounded, but all the events he describes in this sentence happen to be untrue. Neither was this place Aristotle's portico, not did he ever deliver lectures there. A correspondent in *The Spectator* of the 13th June, commenting on the inaccuracy of Abdul Latif's statement humorously asks,—what truth is there in the other events which Abdul Latif mentions, even leaving out of consideration the description of the burning of the library ?

This is the basis of those authorities and traditions on which the European historians solely rely. The weak grounds on which they have

based their discussions are indeed very remarkable. It will be evident, from the original passages from Abdul Latif and the other authors that we have quoted, that Makreezi himself never mentioned this circumstance, but in the extract which he made from Abdul Latif's writing on the *Minaret of Savari*, the library finds incidental mention. Haji Khalifa does not mention Alexandria even by name. Of course, he refers to libraries in general, and such reference is only under the head of 'hearsay,' wherefrom it is evident, that it is by no means an accepted tradition. But the European historians have always referred to the names of Abdul Latif and the others in such a manner, as to leave the impression that these authors claimed truth for this tradition and wrote particularly on the subject.

Professor De Sacy in his Note thus wrote—Of the objections raised against the statement of Abulpharagius, the strongest is, that the historians of Arabia are silent with respect to this important occurrence. After this, Professor De Sacy thus meets this objection :—'But the strength of this objection is weakened by the evidence of Abdul Latif and Makreezi.' The absurdity of this contention lies in the fact that the said Professor himself says further on 'Although it may be urged, with sufficient cause, that Makreezi only copied his passage from Abdul Latif.'

Mr. Crichton writes: This occurrence does not derive its authority solely from the statement of Abulpharagius; but on the other hand, Makreezi and Abdul Latif who have written books on the ancient history of Egypt, also mention it.

Professor White with great emphasis writes: Against the negative arguments of Gibbon, we make bold to adduce the positive evidence of two Arabic Historians, who are such accepted authorities that no objection can be taken to them. They are very enthusiastic followers of Islam. They are Abdul Latif and Makreezi; who, not only agree in recording this circumstance, *i.e.*, the burning of the library, but accurately describe its whereabouts.

How skilfully has Professor White argued in this matter? Abdul Latif in his description of the minaret, incidentally, mentions the circumstance. Professor White clothes it in such a garb as to lead a person ignorant of facts, to believe that Abdul Latif wanted not only to establish the truth of this event, but to fix the exact position of the library.

Although European historians in attempting to prove the accuracy of this tradition, have always quoted the names of these three authorities only, *viz.*, Abdul Latif, Makreezi and Haji Khalifa, (and we have in this connection discussed the writings of these authors), yet some European authors

have even gone further and have, without any foundation in fact, stated that there is much independent testimony corroborating this event. Mr. Crichton in a footnote remarks—'Baron De Sacy, in his lengthy note on the translation of Abdul Latif (Description of Egypt page 240), has collected evidence from various Arabic authors, whose works exist in the Paris Royal Library. From them, it is proved that the statement of Abulpharagius is reliable; but conceited Gibbon had never seen those works.'

This passage will easily mislead an ignorant person, and particularly a person who has an innocent belief in the veracity of European authors; for, he will accept it as true, that, in the magnificent library of Paris, there certainly exist materials to prove this tradition; for, if not, how could such a false tradition receive such wide publication throughout Europe?

But our readers should not be awed by the grand name of Paris. De Sacy's note, as well as the works to which he refers, are before us. Undoubtedly De Sacy with great emphasis and zeal wanted to prove this circumstance. It is a pity, however, that his praiseworthy zeal is not borne out by his arguments. In this connection we give a literal translation of his Note :—

"The truth of the reference to the destruction of the Alexandrian Library by order of the Caliph

Omar, by Abulpharagius, in his history of the Dynasties of Arabia, has been doubted by numerous celebrated authors. Whatever has been written on this subject and the amount of reliance to be placed thereon, require lengthened discussion.

"The arguments adduced against the truth of this tradition have been published in a collected form in German by Inch Rainhard at Gottingen in 1792. They are also contained in the remarks made by M. de Saint Croix in his article in the *Encyclopædia* V, 433. M. Langles and Professor White support the general belief, but do not accept the exaggerated description of Abulpharagius.

"Of the objections raised against the description of Abulpharagius, the strongest is that the Arabic historians are silent on this important subject. But the strength of this objection is certainly weakened by the evidence of Abdul Latif and Makreezi; it may be urged, that it is evident that Makreezi has, as pointed out by M. Langles, only copied the words of Abdul Latif.

"I do not mean, by the remarks I shall make, to enter the lists with such a learned author (as M. Langles), whom I heartily look upon with feelings of regard and veneration. But I have discovered some authorities and I am certain, though I do not entirely agree with Abulpharagius, who mentions

such details as will hardly stand the test of a critical examination, that it is so far true that it is based upon a historic truth, and that when the Arabs conquered this city, Amr Ibnul-A'as in carrying out the behests of Caliph Omar, ordered the burning of a large collection of books which existed in Alexandria."

Professor De Sacy then quotes the words of Haji Khalifa and Ibn-i-Khaldoun, and thereby proves the destruction of the Alexandrian Library.

We were very anxious to have a look at the authorities which Professor De Sacy had discovered. But we are sorry that they have turned out to be of no value. By hunting up the magnificent Paris Library, the Professor has only been able to discover two authorities—one of whom is the same Haji Khalifa, from whose work we have already quoted, and the other is a paragraph from Ibn-i-Khaldoun, in which there is a mention of the Persian library, and even that finds expression in an incidental and summary manner. It is wonderful logic indeed to bring forward the fact of the burning of the Persian library as an argument to support the burning of the Alexandrian Library. Although Ibn-i-Khaldoun's statement is untrue and contrary to the writings of all true and accepted historians, we do not discuss that point in this connection, for, we are here concerned only with the Alexandrian Library, and not with the Persian one.

Perhaps it may be said, that Professor De Sacy has only adduced Ibn-i-Khaldoun's evidence as corroborative. But it is valueless even as such, for, if any conclusion at all is derivable from it, it is only this, that the Alexandrian occurrence is entirely unfounded : for, some one or other of the numerous Arabic historians would have referred to it at least in a manner similar to that in which Ibn-i-Khaldoun has referred to that of Persia. But not in one of the hundreds and thousands of Arabic histories, can any trace be obtained of this alleged event.

The beauty of the thing lies in the fact that even Abulpharagius, who himself happens to be the respondent in this discussion, does not give expression to the statement in a manner from which it may be evident that he himself accepted it as true or believed in it.

In the original history of Abulpharagius which exists in Syrian, and which contains full particulars of the Conquest of Alexandria, this occurrence is not mentioned at all. It, however, finds a place in the form in which we have extracted it above, in the Abstract of the work in the Arabic language. But there is no satisfactory evidence to show that the additions in the Arabic 'Abstract,' which are not found in the original Syrian, were made by Abulpharagius himself or, are only interpolations. Mr. Krell of Germany thus remarks

on the Abstract—"There are many things in it which are not found in the original Syrian. But it does not appear whether these additions are interpolations made after the death of Abulpharagius, or whether they were made by Abulpharagius himself; because all the editions are incomplete."

The mention of the burning of the Alexandrian Library, though made in the Abstract, is not in the original Syrian. The suspicion that this passage is an interpolation is strengthened by the fact that this Abstract was edited by Professor Pococke with his corrections, and he was very clever in concocting occurrences to the discredit of the Mussalmans.

This discussion was entered into, to find out whether Abdul Latif and Haji Khalifa had given any evidence in connection with this occurrence, or not. But even granting for the sake of argument, that these authors had accepted this tradition as true, the next question that arises is whether their evidence is reliable or not. Abdul Latif Bagdadi was born in 557 Hegira; and Haji Khalifa lived only two centuries ago. Who then can say that the evidence of authors, who were born 500 years or more after the occurrence, and who quote no authority, nor give any reference, is sufficient to establish the truth of an event alleged to have occurred in the first century after the Hegira?

With regard to these authors, we must also enquire into the status they occupy as historians, for the European authors have, even in this connection, made use of ungrounded arguments. They sing the praises of Haji Khalifa and Abdul Latif in high sounding words, and add that in consideration of their dignity and greatness, they should be regarded as authorities. To expose the hollowness of the praise bestowed by the European historians, it is enough to put one question. We also admit that Abdul Latif and Haji Khalifa are very able authors. But we beg to ask, in what branch of learning? Abdul Latif was undoubtedly a great Professor of Medicine. Many of his works on medicine are still extant. *Ibn-i-Aseeba* has, in his *Lives of Eminent Physicians*, referred to him in great detail, from which his extensive knowledge of medicine is evident. But, has any one called him a historian? Has he, in his Autobiography mentioned anything about the science of history? If not, what supports his greatness in the recording of historical events? If any historical event were based on the authority of *Al-Farabi* or *Avicena* (great Physicians), what value and reliance can be placed on it? Haji Khalifa has undoubtedly written a very valuable book on bibliography which is not a historical work, but only contains a description of books written by Mahomedan authors. Besides this we know of no other production of his. Neither has he written any well-known historical

work, nor has any one classed him among historians. The truth, however, is, though it is very shameful to our antagonists, that such an important occurrence, which, as they say, continued in operation for six months, is not authenticated by any reference to it in the hundreds and thousands of Mussalman works on history, but they have to take refuge under the protection of a Professor of medicine or a Bibliographer.

Up to the present point, we had treated our antagonists as the plaintiffs in this discussion, for they are really such, on accepted canons of literary controversy. We shall now proceed a step further and turn the tables by becoming complainants. We maintain that neither the Library was destroyed under the orders of Caliph Omar, nor did any Mussalmans ever destroy it. In the first place, the procedure for establishing a negation, (1) by tradition and (2) by probability, must be clearly understood. For instance, let us suppose, that it is held that a certain event did not occur at a certain period; in proving this traditionally, it will be enough to show that it cannot be traced in spite of all the means available for knowing the events that occurred in the said period. Turning to possibility, it will have to be shown that all the evidence available and the circumstances are against the probability of such an occurrence. Upon these principles we hold that the Alexandrian Library was not destroyed by the Mussalmans.

The work of composing and compiling books by Mussalmans, commenced about 140 Hegira, about which time *Muhammad-bin-Isâc* wrote a Biography of the Prophet. After this, historians wrote general histories, in which, the conquests made by, and the events that happened in the times of, the four Caliphs find detailed mention. Of these works, those that are extant and those whose names have come down to us are :—

(1). *Conquest of countries by Balazari.*—Balazari lived in the reign of Caliph Al Muthavakkil Billah. He has given a detailed description of all the events with full and contiguous authorities.

(2). *History of Yakub.—i.e.*, History of Ahmed-bin-Abi Yakub. This is a very old author having been a contemporary of the courtiers of Mamoon-ar-Rashid. He carried this history down to 259 Hegira, and probably he was living in that year. This work was published in two volumes at Leyden in 1883.

(3). History of *Abu Hanifa.* Published in Leyden.

(4) History of *Abu-Jaffer Thabri.* This history is somewhat more recent than those above mentioned, the author having died in 310 Hegira. He composed his work, giving contiguous authorities for all the events he described, and the names of the persons by whom the traditions were handed down. This is a storehouse of all those traditions

that are extant, or were current at some former time. It is therefore correct to say on account of this circumstance, that any tradition of the first 300 years, which does not find mention in this work, is not an historical occurrence. This is a very voluminous work and 23 volumes of it have been printed in Holland, and many more volumes are to follow.

(5). The histories of Ibn-i-Aseer and Ibn-i-Khaldoun, which are considered to be very reliable, are only abstracts of the History of *Thabri*, as the authors themselves have acknowledged them to be.

In addition to the above works, many more histories of Islam have been written. But as regards ancient events, such books derive their information only from those above referred to, a fact which is amply proved by a perusal of the said numerous works. Besides the above, books have been written particularly regarding Egypt and Alexandria. Those which we have been able to discover, are the following :—

(Here is given a list of Books.)

Though these books are not available at the present day, many compilations of a previous period are existing, in which the traditions of all the old books are gathered together. For example, in his Introduction to "Husnul-Mahazira," Seothi wrote that he compiled it from twenty-eight histories, of which the most comprehensive was that

by Makreezi, which contains details of the minutest occurrences in Egypt and Alexandria.

These books are authentic, and over and above them, there is no other means available for instituting an enquiry into the condition of those times. In none of them is any information obtainable regarding the event under discussion. All of them, specially Thabri, the Conquest of Countries by Balazari, Husnul-Mahazira and Makreezi's work, contain detailed descriptions of the Conquest of Alexandria; but in not one of them is there any mention of the library.

No information regarding this alleged occurrence is obtainable even in books, where it ought to have been at least incidentally or accidentally alluded to. For instance, in the biographies that have been written of physicians and other learned men, in which a general mention of Philoponus occurs, there is no reference to it. Abulpharagius concocts this story while writing of Philoponus and says—"Philoponus asked for the gift of the library from Amr; upon which Amr, acting under instructions from the Caliph Omar, ordered that it should be burnt." Philoponus was a physician and philosopher. All his works have been translated into Arabic, and in consequence of this, his detailed life is to be found recorded in the Biography of physicians and other learned men. Ibn-i-Aseeba and Ibnun-Nadim have given

full particulars of the life and works of Philoponus. They have also mentioned that he presented himself before Amr and was received with great respect. Notwithstanding all these details there is not the slightest mention anywhere of the library; from which it is plain that its alleged destruction is entirely without foundation.

The event could have also found incidental mention in such works as Geographies, memoirs of travel, &c.; but even these do not contain any reference. The fact, however, is that besides the writings of Abdul Latif, a true extract from which we have given above, the whole field of Mahomedan literature does not contain any mention of this circumstance! What stronger argument can be adduced to prove the baselessness of this tradition?

Even in the older Christian histories there is no mention of it. Eusex, the Patriarch of Alexandria, who died in 940 A.D., has written a detailed account of the conquest of Alexandria. Similarly Almacin who lived three hundred years after the alleged occurrence, that is, two hundred years before Abulpharagius, wrote a history of Egypt, wherein he has described in great detail, the conquest of Alexandria. But in these books too, there is not a word about the destruction of the Alexandrian Library. These authors were zealous Christians, and it cannot be suspected that they were in any way partial to the Mahomedans.

They were also fond of learning and were critical enquirers, and they could not have looked upon the destruction of a collection of such valuable books as an ordinary matter. By long residence and great curiosity of mind, they had acquired a very intimate and extensive knowledge of Egypt. Under these circumstances, the absolute silence of these two authors on this disputed point, plainly proves that it has no foundation whatever in truth. In consequence of this, European authors with a keen sense of justice, such as Gibbon and Krell have adduced their silence as a strong proof against the truth of this tradition.

Another very strong argument to prove the baselessness of this story is, that the library, that is alleged to have been burnt, had been destroyed before the time of the Mussalmans. The library had been established by the idolatrous Kings of Egypt, who worshipped many gods, so that when Egypt came under the influence of Christianity, the Christian Kings actuated by religious fanaticism, in which they were encouraged by their priests, destroyed the books. The celebrated authors and historians of Europe, have had to admit that this library had been destroyed before the time of Islam. M. Renan, the celebrated French critic, once delivered a lecture on "Islam and Knowledge" before the Academy, which was printed in pamphlet form in Paris in 1883. Although this lecture was character-

ized by religious prejudice against the Mussalmans, that is to say, an attempt was made in it to prove with great emphasis that Islam and Knowledge can never exist together; this bigoted man nevertheless refers to the Alexandrian Library in these words:—" Though it has often been alleged that Amr destroyed the Alexandrian Library, it is not true; for, it had been destroyed long before."

The destruction of this library before the time of Islam is such an accepted fact, that even those European historians who are anxious to prove the story cannot disagree with it. Dr. Draper writes:—" Julius Cæsar had burnt more than half; the Patriarchs of Alexandria had not only permitted, but superintended the dispersion of almost all the rest. Orosius expressly states he saw the empty cases or shelves of the library twenty years after Theophilus, the uncle of St. Cyril, had procured from the Emperor Theodosius a rescript for its destruction."

As, thus, the destruction of the library previous to the advent of the Mohammedans is an ascertained fact, our antagonists have had recourse to another subterfuge. Some allege that the library destroyed by Amr was not the Royal library, but it was that of Serapium; as for instance, the writer in the Spectator, who refers to it, by way of supporting the statement of Abulpharagius. Such an

argument is, however, nothing less than attributing a meaning to a passage which the writer himself never dreamt of; for, Abulpharagius, in referring to the request Philoponus made to Amr for the books, uses the following distinct language:—"Those philosophical works that are in the Royal treasure houses" (*i.e.*, libraries). But even admitting that this story refers to the Serapium library, it will be difficult for our antagonists to prove that that library existed at the conquest of Alexandria. It may, however, turn out that the whole or nearly the whole of that library also, had already been destroyed.

Mr. Krell writes that the condition of Serapium and its library is up to this time enveloped in darkness. It is, however, an ascertained fact that the temple of Serapium, to which was attached the library, had, in 389 A. D., in the reign of Theodosius, been converted into a church. But whether the library existed in that place at the time of this transformation, or whether it had been destroyed, or whether the books had been carried away to Constantinople, is not proved at all. The last supposition, *viz.*, that the books were translated to Constantinople, appears the most probable; for, the library founded by Theodosius the Second, in Constantinople in the fifth century, consisted mainly of books from Egypt and Asia Minor.

M. Sedillot assuming that the disputed library existed in Serapium wrote:—"No contemporary

historian mentions the event (the destruction of the library), but even were it a fact, it could only have referred to a limited number of books; for, before 390 A.D., the greater part had been destroyed; partly in the time of Cæsar, and partly in the time of Theodosius."

We now proceed to establish the truth or otherwise of this story with the help of the principles of "probability." The details of this occurrence, as described by Abulpharagius (who is the concoctor of this fiction), are so absurd, that all European historians for and against the truth of the tradition, look upon them as spurious. Professor DeSacy, who with great zeal and emphasis, has attempted to prove its truth, has admitted that the details, as given by Abulpharagius, are false. The Contributors to the Encyclopædia Britannica, have also laughed at them. In fact, what but an idle story can the allegations of the distribution of the books among the baths (about four thousand in number), of their continuing to be consumed for six months, and of their serving as fuel, be supposed to be? Though Abulpharagius does not give the exact number of baths in Egypt, it is ascertained that their number was four thousand. It is therefore necessary to understand by the term "the baths of Egypt," four thousand baths, as the European historians have generally understood it to mean. If now we calculate arithmetically what number fell to each bath a day, we

find that it could not have exceeded one book or rather half a book, or that the baths were so small that one book or even half a book sufficed for each, daily, or that the books were so voluminous that half a book was quite enough to serve as fuel for a bath for a whole day.

It is also an admitted fact that in those days books were written on parchment, which could not be used as fuel. It therefore, appears the more absurd that books should have served this purpose. Dr. Draper writes:—"We may be sure that the bath-men of Alexandria did not resort to parchment, so long as they could find any thing else, and of parchment, a very large portion of these books was composed."

This story was, no doubt, concocted for the purpose of casting dirt upon the Mussalmans. But they never thought that the Christians would stand accused of it on this very account. Let us even suppose the impossible story of Amr distributing these books among the baths, to be true; the bath keepers being all Christians, they could have saved the books by using some other fuel, for Amr did not stay six months in Alexandria after its conquest, and there was no fear of being called to account.

Although this summary description, which is enough to convince the general public of its impossibility, is sufficient to dispose of this fiction,

further researches will, no doubt, more fully expose its fallacy. If we look at this occurrence from the point of view of possibility, we have to take into consideration the following circumstances:—

How and under what conditions was Alexandria taken possession of?

How were the other countries, conquered under similar circumstances, treated?

What was the general mode of procedure of Caliph Omar in such cases?

What were the personal inclinations and prejudices of Amr Ibnul-A'as?

Whether traces of the knowledge preserved in the Alexandrian Library are still extant in Mahomedan works?

The answer to each one of these questions can more or less settle the disputed point.

A reference to any of the authentic histories of the time, will prove that protection was guaranteed to the conquered race after the taking of Alexandria. Balazari, in his "Conquest of Countries,"—a very ancient work, wherein all the events are described with proper references and authorities, thus writes:—

"Amr conquered Alexandria with the help of the sword, and plundered the commissariat, but spared the people and did not massacre or imprison them, but guaranteed them protection."

The same description is met with in the works of Ibn-i-Aseer, Ibn-i-Khaldoun and others. The most important item that was guaranteed was that their lives, property, cash, articles, domestic animals, houses, &c., would be left unmolested. When Persia and Syria were conquered, protection was guaranteed, and the articles of the agreements entered into are quoted in all histories, from which we gather that these rights were particularly protected. The agreement with Egypt itself is referred to in the following terms—Amr Ibnul-A'as granted to the Egyptians the protection of their lives, blood, and property to the extent of the smallest weight and measure. According to the Môjamul-Baldan, the agreement was to the following effect—'Their lands and property will remain theirs, and no part thereof shall be molested.'

The behaviour of Caliph Omar towards the protected people cannot in this connection be fully gone into, but it may, *en passant*, be mentioned that he always extended the same treatment alike to the protected people and the Mussalmans as regards their lives and property. In the town of Hira, a Mussalman killed a protected subject. The Mussalman was thereupon ordered to be executed, and the order was carried out publicly. The poor among the protected used to be given doles from the public charitable funds. During the conquest of Persia and Syria, churches and temples were left unmolested. When about to

die, what more could Caliph Omar have done than make the following three behests :—

"To him who shall be appointed Caliph after me, I hereby solemnly make these behests under instructions from the Prophet, *viz* :—(1) He shall carry out the agreements entered into with the protected people ; (2) he shall fight for their protection against their enemies ; and (3) he shall not impose more burdens upon them than what they can bear."

Though the bigoted authors of Europe accuse Caliph Omar of cruelty and oppression, they do not dispute the fact that whenever verbal or written orders were issued by him, they were at once literally carried out. The most bigoted of Christian historians cannot point out a single instance throughout his life wherein his orders were not fully enforced.

It being thus admitted that a guarantee of protection was granted to the inhabitants of Alexandria, and the behaviour of Caliph Omar towards protected people being fully understood, how is it possible that the great monument (*i. e.* library) of the Alexandrians could have been destroyed in such an unsympathetic manner ? Could this library have been more abominable to the Mussalmans than churches and idolatrous fire temples ? When hundreds and thousands of churches and fire temples were allowed to continue to exist in all the

conquered countries, nay, when the preservation of such institutions, whether existing within the towns or without, was specially enjoined, how is it possible to conceive that such a cruel fate was reserved for a library?

The truth is, that Abulpharagius (who is the concocter of this false tradition) did not know how to tell a lie. If he had stated that this event had occurred during the siege or conquest, it might have appeared possible, for the blind fury of war often stops short at nothing. But when it is admitted that protection had been given to the city, that the inhabitants had been guaranteed against molestation, that the enthusiasm of attack and open warfare had cooled down, the perpetration of such a barbarous act could only have appeared possible to Abulpharagius. Professor Sedillot has, upon these very grounds, declared Abulpharagius' description as unreliable. He writes :—'When it is accepted that immediately after the conquest, the city was not destroyed, it is difficult to believe that such a barbarous order could have been passed at a time when the blood of the conquerors had cooled down.'

Abulpharagius himself has borne high testimony to the ability and inclination of Amr Ibnul-A'as. He thus writes of him in connection with Philoponus.—

"He (Philoponus) presented himself before Amr. Amr had heard of the ability of Philoponus, and he therefore received him with great respect, and listened to his discoures on philosophical subjects, such as the Arabs had never known. As Amr himself was a clever and intelligent man, he was greatly struck and became charmed with him. He therefore found John's company indispensable, and never allowed him to leave his side."

Just fancy a man like Amr who was fond of learning, who, notwithstanding his religious zeal, looked upon a learned Christian as his dear friend, and who had been charmed by his literary and philosophical discourses, ordering the destruction of the library in such an unfeeling manner, an act, which even the worst barbarian would not have committed! We admit that Amr was not absolute, but, in his letter to Caliph Omar, he could, at least, have put in a word for the library. Amr had, on many occasions, pressed Caliph Omar to sanction measures to which the latter was personally opposed.

For instance, the Caliph by no means approved of an attack on Egypt and Alexandria; but Amr persuaded him to sanction the proposal, by taking the responsibility upon himself, and saying that it was by no means a difficult task. According to the tradition of the learned Balazari (a celebrated historical authority), Amr Ibnul-A'as did not even

wait for the Caliph's permission, but started for Egypt. It is generally accepted that in settling the terms upon which Egypt and Alexandria capitulated, and in framing those of the agreement with the inhabitants, Amr had his own way. Of course, the Caliph was informed and his formal sanction obtained. Could not Amr Ibnul-A'as have done the same with regard to the library?

A more noteworthy fact is that Amr Ibnul-A'as, in his letter to the Caliph, written immediately after the conquest of Alexandria, mentions every thing in detail. Thus after referring to the capture of the city, he writes:—"In this city, there are four thousand baths, four thousand terraced houses, forty thousand Jewish tax-payers, four hundred royal places of recreation and twelve thousand gardens that produce vegetables." But in all these particulars, we find no mention of the imaginary library of our friend Abulpharagius.

Taking into consideration all these historical facts, the truth of the matter appears to be that before the advent of Islam, whatever ancient libraries might have existed in Alexandria, had been destroyed, for reasons detailed by the historians of the times. Notwithstanding these unfortunate incidents, however, all traces of literature had not entirely disappeared; for, in such a city, which for hundreds of years had been the recognised seat of learning, it was impossible that all literary

mementoes should have been destroyed all at once. Thus, some time before Islam, there were seven very celebrated doctors and philosophers in Alexandria. Of them Philoponus lived longest, even up to the time of Amr Ibnul-A'as. The ancient libraries of Alexandria had long before been destroyed, but the books, that had been collected later on, existed at the time of the Muslim conquest, and for a long time thereafter. Thus, in the time of the Abbasides, when a search was made for literary remains, a number of books were obtained from Alexandria. The emissaries of Haroun-ar-Rasheed, Mamoon-ar-Rasheed and Al-Muthavakkil-Billah, who scoured Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor and Cyprus in search of philosophical and medical works, went to Alexandria also with the same purpose and collected many books. One of them, Hunain-Bin-Isac writes—" I travelled over the island of Cyprus, Syria, Palestine and all the cities of Egypt in search of Galenius' work, *Al burhan*, and ultimately reached Alexandria, but I could find no trace of it. In Damascus only fragments of the work existed, and these too in an uncompiled form."

Though Hunain did not succeed in obtaining a copy of this book, as the ancient libraries had been destroyed before the time of the Mahomedans, the works that had been composed after such destruction and preserved up to the Mahomedan period, were, almost without exception available.

The works of the seven learned contemporaries of Philoponus were obtained, complete, and translated into Arabic. Special care was taken of Philoponus' works. The following list comprises those which have been translated into Arabic.

[Here follows a list of Philoponus' works.]

Besides the above there are other books, the details of which are to be found in the history of Physicians, &c., and the Bibliotheca of Ibn-un-Nadeem. Had the Alexandrian library been destroyed in the time of Amr Ibnul-A'as, it was necessary that the works of Philoponus, who was the contemporary of Amr, and (according to Abulpharagius) the Librarian, should have been the first to be destroyed.

In fact, the books that were preserved in Egypt and Alexandria up to the time of the advent of the Mahomedans, were not at all destroyed, but the Mahomedans could not recover the books that had been destroyed before their time. We also learn from history that no object of antiquity that had escaped destruction up to the time of the Mahomedans, was allowed to be destroyed; but such objects were, in subsequent times, very carefully preserved as literary mementoes. Ibnul-Bandi, who was an inhabitant of Egypt

and a great astrologer wrote :—*Vazir Abul-Kasim Ali-bin-Ahmed Jurjani* took charge of the library of Cairo in 435 Hegira, and issued orders to *Qazi abu Abdullah Qazai* and *Ibn-i-Khalkh Varraq* to catalogue the books and to bind those, the covers of which had been spoilt. I visited the library in the company of these two gentlemen, to refer to the books I liked best. The works on Astronomy, Geometry and Philosophy alone amounted to 6,500 volumes. Here I saw the brazen globe which was used by Ptolemy Claudius. I wanted to ascertain its age, and found it to be 2,250 years old. I also found another globe of silver, which Abul Hassan Sofi had made for Uzdud-Dowlah. It weighed 3,000 dirhams, and had been purchased for 3,000 dinars (about 15,000 Rs.)

We have conducted our inquiry into the truth of this subject on the accepted canons of critical research, and it is therefore perfectly immaterial to us whether the European historians agree with us or not; but it is necessary to state for the information of the credulous and particularly for the benefit of those who place implicit belief in European works, that notwithstanding the fact that at one time this tradition had been accepted as true throughout Europe, as critical researches began to progress, the force of its

alleged truth commensurately declined, so much so that the largest number of modern authors now agree in putting it down as an unfounded and doubtful occurrence. Thus far the controversy has progressed up to the present time, and it is trusted that the day is not far distant, when after the fullest enquiry and research, all Europe will join hands and exclaim,

> To them we attributed blame
> The fault, howe'er, is ours alone.

THE END.